

Archaeological watching brief at Kestrels, Haresfield Lane, Stroud Gloucestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for RPS Group

July 2020



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KESTRELS, HAIRSFIELD LANE STROUD GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological watching brief report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Kestrels, Haresfield Lane
Local planning authority: Stroud District Council
Planning reference: S.17/1791/FUL
Central NGR: SO 83353 08584
Commissioning client: RPS Group
Client project reference: JAC26319
WA project number: P5895
WA report number: 2834
Oasis reference: [fieldsec1-399682](#)

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An archaeological watching brief at Kestrels, Haresfield Lane, Stroud, Gloucestershire

By Beth Williams

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Kestrels, Haresfield Lane, Gloucestershire (NGR SO 83353 08584). It was commissioned by RPS Group on behalf of Antony Howard, in advance of a proposed development. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The site is located south of Haresfield Lane (alternately known as Beacon Lane), to the east of Standish Wood Carpark and north of the Cotswold Way. The site consisted of a single trench cut into the plateau and hillside. This will form the foundations and lower story of a proposed house.

The site is adjacent to a Scheduled Dyke Camp (NHLE 1002095) of Roman date, as well as a series of possible Prehistoric barrows (HER 3581, 3582). However, there was no indication of activity of archaeological interest within the site area.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in July 2020 at Kestrels, Haresfield Lane, Gloucestershire (NGR SO 83353 08584). This comprised observation of one trench during groundworks concurrent with construction. The project was commissioned by RPS Group on behalf of Antony Howard, in advance of a proposed development. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference S.17/1791/FUL).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets. The site is adjacent to a Scheduled Dyke Camp (NHLE 1002095) of Roman date, as well as a series of possible Prehistoric barrows (HER 3581, 3582).

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by RPS Group (JAC26319) and approved by Charles Parry. The watching brief also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in the *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located at the southern edge of the plateau at the top of Haresfield Hill, above Standish Wood. The site is bounded by Beacon Lane (otherwise known as Haresfield Lane) to the north, a large meadow to the east, Standish Wood and the Cotswold Way to the south, and Standish Wood Carpark to the west.

The site is mostly covered by woodland, with a small area cleared on the plateau at the north eastern corner. A small house was recently demolished within this area, and a pond, services, and garden features including steps and a wall still remain.

The site slopes from approximately 250m AOD in the north east down to 235 AOD in the south and south east. The slope is gradual within the plateau and drops more significantly at the tree line. The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Birdlip Limestone Formation with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS 2020).

2 Archaeological and historical background

The site stands on top of Haresfield Hill, which contains the scheduled earthworks of both Prehistoric and Roman defensive camps, as well as possible Prehistoric barrows and/or quarries.

The Scheduled monument Haresfield Hill camp and Ring Hill earthworks (Scheduled Monument 1004861) sits approximately 460m west of site, and consists of a univallate hillfort, a Romano-British settlement, a cross dyke, a bowl barrow, buried quarries, and a beacon.

The Scheduled monument Dyke Camp (Scheduled Monument 1002095) is sited immediately adjacent to the eastern edge of site and comprises an irregular diamond-shaped Roman camp defended by a broad bank and ditch.

There are recorded quarry pits to the east and south of site, and possible barrows (HER 3581, 3582) c.500m to the south west of site.

3 Project aims

The aims of the project were to establish a chronological framework for the site if possible and establish the date, form, function, evolution and economic status of any archaeological activity that may be present on the site.

The project also aimed to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any evidence of Roman activity on the site?
2. Is there evidence of Prehistoric activity, as indicated by nearby tumuli, within the watching brief area?

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by RPS Group (RPS 2020). Fieldwork was undertaken between 17th July and 21st July 2020.

One trench, amounting to c.153m² in area, was excavated across the site. The location of the trench is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator.

Observation of the excavated area was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, though any less clear may have not been identified.

Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were hand planned and tied into fixed objects recorded on OS MasterMap.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced.

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited at Stroud District Museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Phasing/Trench descriptions

One large trench was opened, measuring approximately 8.5m by 18m. Topsoil had been fully or partially removed and disturbed by recent demolition. Below this level the deposits were sterile and there was no indication of archaeological activity.

5.1.1 Model summary trench description table

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
100	Topsoil	0.1	0.00	Loose mid-brown sandy/silty clay mix with frequent inclusions of small to medium flat angular stones. Towards the north east, the topsoil had been removed or disturbed by the demolition works.
101	Subsoil/regolith	0.32	0.1	Loose mid brownish red sandy clay with abundant small to large flat angular stones.

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
102	Natural	2m+	0.42	Loose mid-whiteish yellow sandy clay with abundant small to very large flat angular stones and slabs.

Table 1: Summary context descriptions

6 Artefactual evidence

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, no artefacts were identified which were considered to be suitable for analysis.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was approached using standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, no deposits were excavated which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

8 Discussion and conclusions

The excavations at Kestrels, Haresfield Lane did not reveal or disturb any deposits or finds of archaeological significance. The property seems to have been minimally disturbed by the previous house and there is very little depth of any deposit overlying the natural strata.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in all of the trenches/areas to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. It is considered that the nature, density and distribution of archaeological features provides an accurate characterisation of the development site as a whole.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Beth Williams.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers, MCI(A). The report was produced and collated by Beth Williams.

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of this project: Richard Smalley (Director Historic Environment, RPS Group), and Rachel Foster (Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council).

11 Bibliography

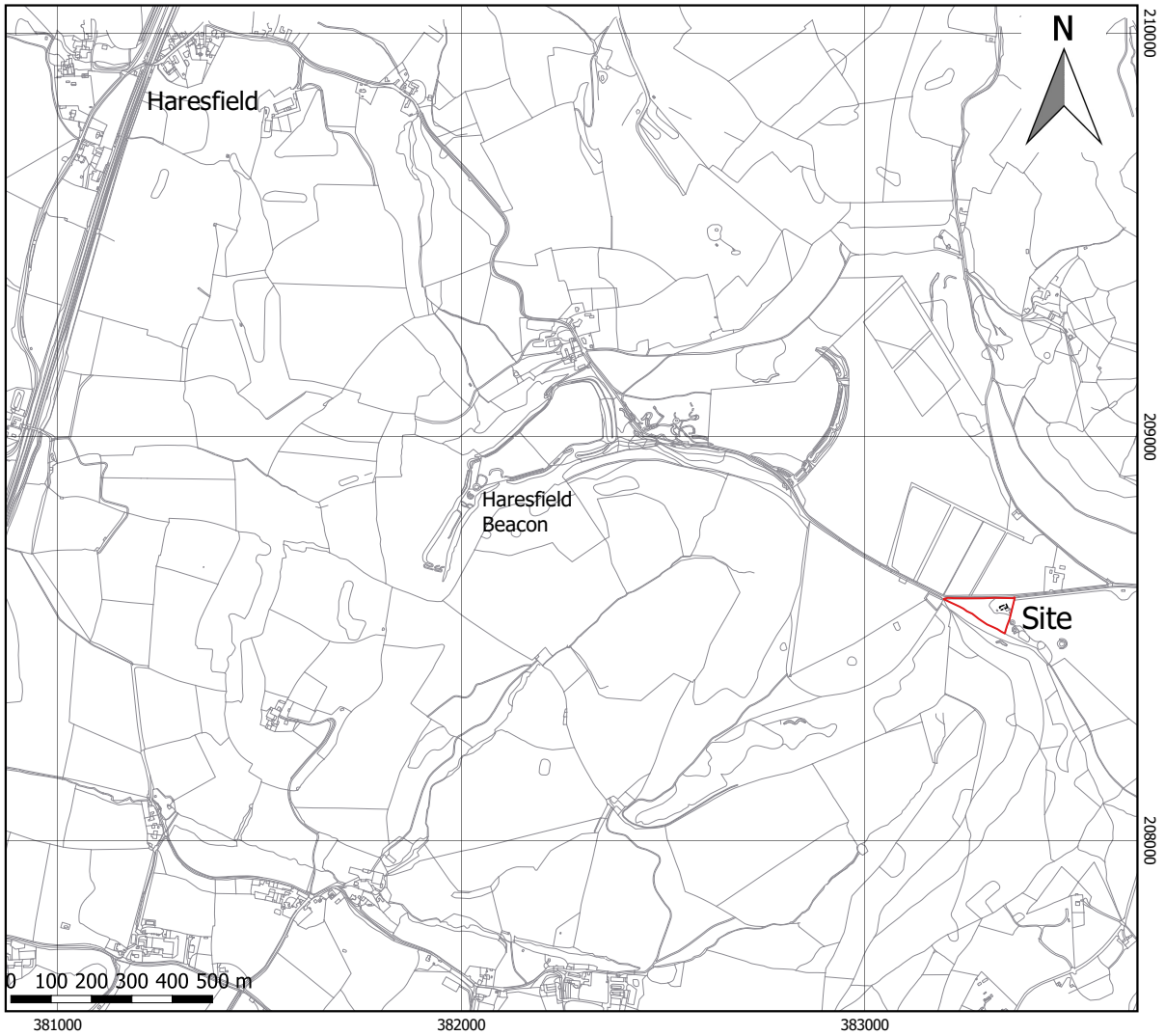
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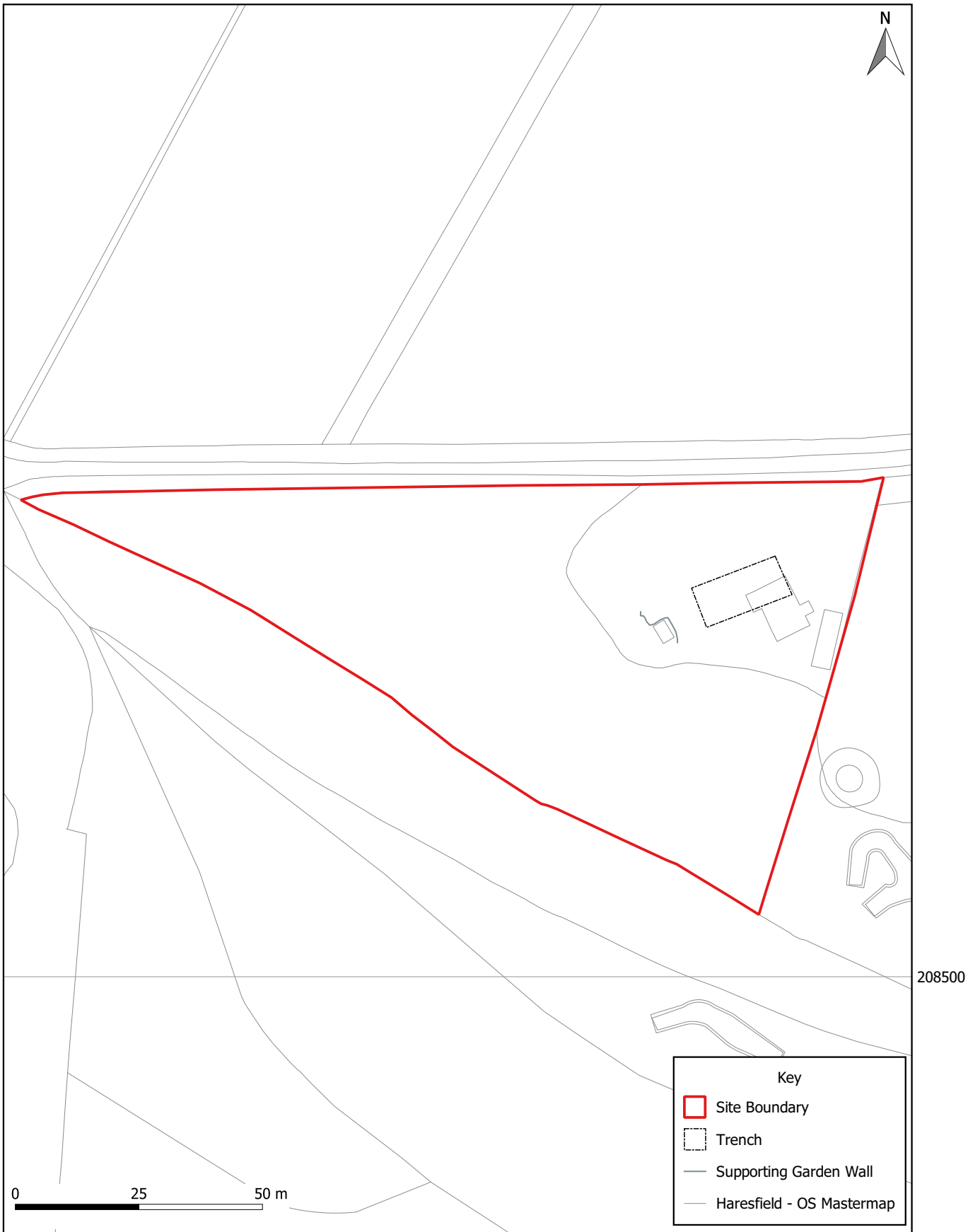
Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



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Map of Site, showing the trench

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: South east facing section of the trench. Facing north west, 1x1m scale



Plate 2: General shot of the trench, post excavation. Facing south

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None
Paper	Report
Digital	Database, GIS, Images raster/digital photography, Text

**OASIS terminology*

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited at Stroud District Museum.